



Lym a wel

Welsh literature has been a continuing experience for fourteen centuries. The earliest poets who composed in Welsh, Taliesin and Aneirin, flourished towards the end of the sixth century.

For its first seven hundred years, the background to Welsh poetry was internecine struggle, and warfare against foreign aggressors: the Angles, the Saxons, the Normans and finally the English. It was a battle which the Welsh could not win; their poets were '... great exponents of the literature of loss'.

Early Welsh poetry was essentially political and never cosy. Extolling the virtues of a strong leader, fostering the inner pride of a small nation, turning the glories of the recent past into memorable verse; these were the chief concerns of the bard. His own view of his function was expressed by the poet, Cynddelw, to his lord, Rhys ap Gruffudd: 'Without me you have no voice; without you I have nothing to say'. It is significant that after crushing the revolt led by Llywelyn the Last, one of the many measures Edward I took to ensure that Wales would never rise again, was to abolish the office of *Pencerdd*, or chief bard, at the Welsh courts.

It seems all the more remarkable, given its recognised function, that such poetry was composed – and it is important to remember that for many centuries it was an oral tradition – with such regard to skill in metrical and alliterative complexity. In the passages I have translated, I have made no attempt to reproduce the intricate patterns of rhyme and metre, but I have made every attempt to preserve the robust strength of the language, and to convey some of its emotional intensity. This with the help of a great body of Welsh scholarship, a little knowledge of Welsh grammar and a good dictionary.

As for my mezzotints, they are mainly Welsh landscapes, the enduring background to the poetry's powerful images of times when the wind of change howled for centuries across Wales, and '*Llym Awel*' –

Sharp the Wind

About the year 600, Mynyddog Mwynfawr, ruler of the Gododdin, assembled three hundred noble young warriors at his court in Din Eidyn, or Edinburgh, where he feasted them for a year. Mead was the symbol of the hospitality bestowed by the lord on his 'teulu', or war band. Their 'tal-medd', or mead payment, was their fidelity.

The king then sent his elite force to attack the invading Angles at their stronghold at Catraeth, now Catterick in Yorkshire. The Britons were hopelessly outnumbered and of the heroic band of three hundred, the poet, Aneirin, was one of only three who survived. He calls Taliesin to witness that he sang the Gododdin 'before the next day dawned'.

The social background was of a military aristocracy, for whom the accepted morality was courage in war, generosity in peace, a longing for glory and horror of disgrace. *Y Gododdin* is therefore not only an elegy but a celebration for the warriors who attained eternal fame by their fidelity to their lord and unyielding courage in the face of overwhelming odds.

What lends poignancy to the traditional heroic framework that supports the poem through well over a thousand lines is the intimacy of the portraits Aneirin draws of young men he knew personally, eighty of whom he mentions by name. Delivered in a style as terse as it is ironic, his word pictures are hard to forget: of Madog, 'hesitant before a maiden', bold enough in battle; modest Isag, whose 'sword echoed in the heads of mothers'; gentle Ceredig, 'a lover of songs' and a ferocious fighter.

For all the heroes Aneirin sang,

'Short was their life, long their kinsmen's grief'.

*A man in might, a boy in years,
Courageous in battle;
Swift, long-maned steeds
Under a fine youth's thighs;
A light broad shield
On fast sleek haunches;
Gleaming blue blades
Rimmed with wrought gold.
There shall be no enmity
Between you and me.
Rather will I make for you
Song that will praise you:
More eager for the battlefield
Than a wedding feast,
More ready for a raven's meal
Than a burial,
A dear friend was Owain;
It is wrong he lies beneath a cairn.
Wretched to me the place where
Marro's only son was slain.*

*Men rode to Catraeth, swift was their host;
Fresh mead was their meal and it was bitter.
Three hundred fought in the order of battle
And after the exultation there was silence.*

*Gredyf gwr oed gwas
gwrhyt am dias.
meirch mwth myngvras.
a dan vordwyt megyrwas.
ysgwyt ysgauyn lledan
ar bedrein mein vuan.
kledyuawr glas glan
ethy eur aphan.
ny bi ef a vi
cas e rof a thi.
Gwell gwneif a thi
ar wawt dy uoli.
kynt y waet e lawr
nogyt y neithyawr.
kynt y vwyt y vrein
noc y argyurein.
ku kyueillt ewein.
kwl y uot a dan vrein.
marth ym pa vro
llad vn mab marro.*

*Gwyr a aeth gatraeth oed fraeth eu llu.
glasved eu hancwyn a gwenwyn vu
trychant trwy beiryant en cattau.
a gwedy elwch tawelwch vu.*



Some time in the second half of the seventh century the royal court of Cynddylan, in Powys, was attacked and destroyed by the Saxons. Cynddylan, his father and all his brothers were slain, but Heledd, his sister, was left alive to witness the burning of the hall at Pengwern. Possibly, she was an unsuccessful 'peace-weaver', given in marriage to achieve a settlement between Powys and Mercia, and left behind after the attack, repudiated now that she was no longer useful. Tragic Heledd, the wanderer, was an historical figure, however much her story may have grown before it was composed two centuries later.

The mood of the poem is one of unrelieved despair. It begins with Heledd's anguished lament for her favourite brother as she contemplates the still burning ruins. She recalls how Cynddylan, fair and still young, had been a fine leader – a hound in pursuit of his enemies; towards his people, warm like a spring fire. Now his body is one with the blackened ashes of the home that was theirs. As she looks on the dark hall, her controlled agony is as terrible in its way as her image later of the eagle of Pengwern feasting on the flesh of Cynddylan.

*Cynddylan's hall is dark tonight
Without fire, without a bed;
I will weep awhile, and then be silent.*

*Cynddylan's hall is dark tonight
Without fire, without a candle;
Who, save God, will keep me from madness?*

*Cynddylan's hall is forsaken this night;
Gone is your lord.
Oh death, why leave me behind?*

*Cynddylan's hall is cheerless tonight
High on its massive rock
Without its lord, without retainers, without power.*

*The grey-crested eagle of Pengwern – tonight
Very loud is his scream
Greedy for the flesh I loved.*

*The grey-crested eagle of Pengwern – tonight
High-pitched is his screech
Greedy for the flesh of Cynddylan.*

*The grey-crested eagle of Pengwern,
Raised high are his talons
Greedy for the flesh I love.*

*I have gazed on fallow lands
From the grave mound of Gorwynion.
Long is the sun's path; longer my memories.*

*I had brothers; they were true.
They grew like hazel saplings.
One by one they have gone.*

*Stauell gyndylan ys tywyll heno
heb dan heb wely.
wylaf wers. tawaf wedy.*

*Stauell gyndylan ys tywyll heno.
heb dan heb gannwyll.
namyn duw pwy am dyry pwyll.*

*Stauell gyndylan ys digarat heno.
gwedy yr neb pieuat.
o wi a angheu byrr ym gat.*

*Stauell gyndylan nyt esmwyth heno.
ar benn carrec hytwyth.
heb ner. heb niuer. heb amwyth.*

*Eryr penngwern penngarn llwyd heno.
aruchel y atleis.
eidic am gic a gereis.*

*Eryr penngwern penngarn llwyd heno.
aruchel y euan.
eidic am gic kynndylan.*

*Eryr penngwern pengarn llwyd heno.
aruchel y adaf
eidic am gic a garaf.*

*Neur sylleis olygon ar dirion dir.
o orsed orwynnyon.
hir hwyl heul hwy vyghouyon.*

*Brodyr am bwyat ny vall.
a dyuynt ual gwyd coll
o vn y un edynt oll.*



Although, historically, Llywarch Hen belonged to the 'Heroic Age' of Taliesin and Aneirin, almost three centuries of terrible losses separated the poet of *Y Gododdin* and the poet of the ninth century saga of Llywarch. The mood now is not one of unquestioning valour, even in the face of certain defeat. The spirit of the poetry, like the times, has profoundly changed.

In the following passage, the ageing Llywarch, a chieftain of Powys, has been defending his border against the Saxons. He has goaded twenty three sons into battle and one by one they have been killed. Only his youngest son, Gwên, remains; newly arrived from the court of his uncle, in the north, he is at first not recognised by his father until Gwên insists: 'My mother asserts I am your son.'

The meeting takes the form of a dramatic dialogue in which Gwên is acknowledged by his father, then obliquely reproached for not having come sooner to his aid. Stung by Llywarch's suggestions of cowardice, and non-fulfilment of vows, and by allusions to his father's valour as a youth, Gwên is manoeuvred into promising not only to defend the border, but to put himself in the position of greatest risk in order to preserve his father's honour.

Gwên's final ironic comment begs the question: if Llywarch was always – as he claims – in the forefront of battle, how has he survived to old age, while his twenty three sons have been killed?

Llywarch

*I know in my heart
That we are of one blood.
Long have you stayed away, O Gwên!*

Gwên

*Sharp is my spear, it flashes in battle.
I will prepare to guard the ford.
Though I may not escape, God be with you.*

Llywarch

*If you live, I shall see you again.
If you are killed, I will mourn you.
Lose not a warrior's honour in the fight.*

Gwên

*I will not lose your honour, battle-eager man,
When warriors arm for the border.
I will suffer pain before I give ground.*

Llywarch

*A wave runs up the beach,
Its resolution soon ebbs.
He who is quick to boast is often first to flee.*

Gwên

*I will keep my word:
Spears will be broken where I am;
I do not say I will not flee.*

Llywarch

*When I was the age of that lad over there
Wearing those spurs of gold,
Swiftly would I rush to the spear.*

Gwên

*No doubt what you say is true:
You are alive and your witness is dead.
No old man was a weakling in youth.*

Llywarch

*Neut atwen ar vy awen
Yn hanuot o un achen.
Trigwyd oric elwic, A Wen!*

Gwên

*Llym ympar, llachar ygryt.
Armaaf y wylyaw ryt.
Kyn nyt anghwyf, Duw gennynt!*

Llywarch

*O diengyd, ath welif.
O'th ryledir, ath gwynif.
Na choll wyneb gwr ar gnif.*

Gwên

*Ny chollaf dy wyneb trin wosep wr.
Pan wisc glew y'r ystre.
Porthaf gnif kynn mudif lle.*

Llywarch

*Redegawc tonn ar hyt traeth.
Ech adaf torrit aruaeth.
Kat agdo gnawt ffo ar ffraeth.*

Gwên

*Yssit ym a lauawryf,
Briwaw pelydyr parth y bwyf.
Ny lauaraf na ffowyf.*

Llywarch

*Tra vum i yn oet y gwas draw
A wisc o eur y ottoew,
Bydei re ruthrwn y waew.*

Gwên

*Diheu diweir dywaes,
Ti yn vvw a'th dyst ry las!
Ny bu eidyl hen yn was.*



Gwên rides out to the ford on the River Llawen and dies defending it. He does more than keep his promise; he measures up to all his father's demands, standing his ground resolutely, without resorting to the tactical retreat he had reserved for himself in, 'I do not say I will not flee'.

Llywarch, left to mourn the last of his sons, faces the reality of his extravagant expectations. His pride in Gwên's heroism is tempered by his sense of loss, but also by self-doubt. Llywarch had raised his sons to live and die by the martial ideal that had spurred on the heroes of *Y Gododdin* to certain, if glorious, death. Nothing is left of them, and for Llywarch, only uncertainty.

*Gwên by the Llawen kept watch last night;
Despite the onslaught, he did not retreat.
Chilling is the news on Morlas Dyke.*

*Gwên by the Llawen kept watch last night;
His shield upon his shoulder.
Since he was my son, he was ready.*

*Gwên by the Llawen kept watch last night;
With his shield at his cheek.
Since he was my son, he did not flee.*

*Gwên, warrior, my soul grieves.
Great is the pain of your death;
That was no friend who killed you.*

*Gwên of the strong thighs kept watch last night
At Morlas Ford and its border.
Since he was my son, he did not escape.*

*Gwên, I knew your nature:
You were the rush of an eagle upon the estuaries.
Had I been wise, you would have lived.*

*The wave thunders, it breaks over the ebb flow
When warriors go into battle.
Gwên, woe to the old man who mourns you.*

*The wave thunders, it breaks over the tidal flow
When warriors go in to attack,
Gwên, woe to the old man who has lost you.*

*Four and twenty sons I had —
Gold-torqued leaders of men.
Gwên was the best of them.*

*Gwen wrth lawen yd welas neithwyr
yr athuc ny techas.
oer adrawd ar glawd gorlas.*

*Gwen wrth lawen yd wylwys neithwyr.
ar ysgwyt ar y ysgwyd.
can bu mab ymi bu hywyd.*

*Gwen wrth lawen yd wylis neithwyr
ar ysgwyt ar y gnis.
kan bu mab ymi nyt egis.*

*Gwen gwgyd gochawd vy mryt.
dy leas ys mawr
casnar. nyt car ath ladawr.*

*Gwen vordwyt tylluras a wylas neithwyr
ygoror ryt uorlas.
a chan bu mab ymi ny thechas.*

*Gwen gwydwn dy eissillut.
ruthyr eryr yn ebyr oedut.
betwn dedwyd dianghut.*

*Tonn tyruit toit eruit.
pan ant kynrein ygovit.
gwen gwae ryhen oth etlit.*

*Tonn tyruit toit aches.
pan ant kynrein y neges
gwen gwae ryhen ryth golles.*

*Pedwarmeib ar hugeint am bu
eurdorchawc tywyssawc llu.
oed gwen goreu onadu.*



In the final part of the cycle, Llywarch is infirm, lonely and bent with age. He still vaingloriously recalls his splendid youth, but only to contrast those times when he was welcomed in the halls of Powys with his present pitiful state, banished from his 'honourable bed' in the great hall, cold and neglected.

In this vivid and remarkably unsentimental portrayal of old age, the character of Llywarch remains consistent. He is still self-centred, foolish and cantankerous, and even more unsympathetic in old age since he is now querulous and feeble-minded too. His saving grace is that he knows it. By acknowledging the indignities of his old age, he achieves a kind of dignity, so that his plea to be released from a life, now over-long, empty and inglorious, seems less pathetic than tragic.

*Before I was bent-backed, I was bold.
I was welcome in the mead-hall
Of Powys, paradise of Wales.*

*Before I was bent-backed, I was magnificent.
Mine was the foremost spear, the first to strike.
Now I am hunch-backed, dejected and pitiful.*

*Wooden staff, it is autumn,
The bracken is red, yellow the stubble.
I have turned away from that which I loved.*

*The leaf which the wind blows to and fro
Woe to her for her fate.
She is old. She was born this year.*

*What I loved as a lad is loathsome now:
A girl, a stranger, an unbroken horse.
They no longer suit me.*

*The four things I always hated most
Have come to me at the same time:
Coughing and old age, sickness and sorrow.*

*I am old, I am lonely, I am mis-shapen and cold.
I who once had an honourable bed
Am pitiful now; I am bent in three.*

*I am bent in three, old, a wayward fool.
I am feeble-minded and querulous.
Those who loved me, love me not now.*

*The girls do not love me; no one visits me;
I cannot go about.
Oh why does not death come to me!*

*Kynn bum kein uaglawc bum hy.
am kynnwyssit yg kyuyrddy.
powys paradwys gymry.*

*Kynn bum kein vaglawc bum eiryan.
oed kynwaew vym par. oed kynwan
wyf keuynggrwm. wyf trwm wyf truan.*

*Baglan brenn neut kynhayaf.
rud redyn melyn kalaf.
neur digereis a garaf.*

*Y deilen honn neus kenniret gwynt.
gwaе hi oe thynghet.
hi hen eleni y ganet.*

*A gereis i yr yn was yssy gas gennyf.
merch estrawn a march glas.
neut nat mi eu kyuadas.*

*Vym pedwar prifgas eirmoet.
yt gyueruydynt yn vn oet.
pas a heneint heint a hoet.*

*Wyf hen wyf unic wyf annelwic oer
gwedy gwely keinmic.
wyf truan wyf tridyblic.*

*Wyf tridyblic hen wyf annwadal drut.
wyf ehut wyf annwar.
y sawl am karawd nym kar.*

*Nym kar rianed nym kenniret neb.
ny allaf darymret.
wi a agheu nam dygret.*



In the following verses, a reluctant warrior is debating the wisdom of going on a raid. The weather is overwhelmingly harsh: biting winds, snow, ice, broken fords and short days – a season when warfare is neither customary nor practical. The oppressiveness of the weather and sickness have enfeebled him; he will not ride to battle with the other warriors. Yet in spite of these good reasons for staying at home, he is mindful that ‘the coward breeds many excuses’.

What threads in and out of these fine passages of nature poetry is a deliberation on the role of prudence and courage in warfare. This is not a problem which would have concerned the heroes of *Y Gododdin*, for whom prudence and cowardice were one. But the code of honour of the Heroic Age no longer applies; it is four centuries later, and the hero’s predicament more complex.

*Sharp the wind, bare the hill, shelter hard to find.
The ford is spoiled, the lake freezes:
A man can stand on a single reed.*

*Wave upon wave breaks over the shore;
Very loud the howls against the mountain peaks.
Outside, a man can scarcely stand.*

*Cold is the lake bed before the onslaught of winter;
Withered the reeds, the stalks broken;
Savage the wind, the woods are bare.*

*Cold is the fish bed in the shadow of ice;
Lean the stag, bearded the stalks;
Short is the afternoon, the trees bowed down.*

*Snow falls, white is its covering.
Warriors do not go campaigning.
Cold are the lakes, their colour lacks warmth.*

*Snow falls; white is the hoarfrost.
Idle is the shield on an old man's shoulder.
Very great is the wind and the grass is frozen.*

*Snow falls, it covers the valley;
Warriors hasten to battle.
I do not go; sickness prevents me.*

*Bees are in shelter, cold the ford's crossing;
The ice freezes where it will.
Despite all evasion, death will come.*

*Bees in hiding from the wetness of winter;
Pale is the sedge, the cowparsley hollow.
A poor possession is cowardice in a warrior.*

*Llym awel llum brin anhaut caffael clid.
llicrid rid reuhid llin.
ry seiw gur ar vn conin.*

*Ton tra thon toid tu tir.
goruchel guaetev rac bron banev bre.
breit allan orseuir.*

*Oer guely lluch rac brythuch gaeaw
crin calaw caun truch.
kedic awel. coed in i bluch.*

*Oer guely pisscaud yg kisscaud iaen.
cul hit caun barywhaud.
birr diuedit guit gyvrhaud.*

*Ottid eiry guin y cnes.
nid a kedwir oe neges.
oer llinnev eu llyu heb tes.*

*Ottid eiry guin aren.
segur yscuid ar iscuit hen.
ryuaur quint reuhid dien.*

*Ottid eiry tohid istrad.
diuryssint vy keduir y cad.
mi nid aw anaw nim gad*

*Guenin igodo. oer agdo rid.
reuid rev pan vo.
ir nep goleith. lleith dyppo.*

*Guenin ig clidur rac gulybur gaeaw.
glas cunlleit cev ewur.
dricweuet llyvrder ar gur.*



Long before the tenth century eulogy for Geraint was composed, it was clear that a decisive victory over the Saxons was impossible. The bards took consolation in constructing an idealised picture of a golden era in which myth and legend became confused with history: 'an impossible dream of an incredible past'.

Geraint was a folk hero from the Heroic Age. Little is known about him, but his name is linked with the Arthurian legend, since Arthur is mentioned as having lost brave warriors in the battle described in the poem.

The images of the carnage are vivid and unsentimental; the contrast powerful, between the drinking of wine from sparkling glass in former feasting, and after the battle 'the feasting of ravens on entrails'. Nor is it difficult to imagine how satisfying an audience who delighted in the marvels of Celtic repetitive art would have found the ritualistic repetition of the verses on Geraint's horses.

Before Geraint, despoiler of the enemy,
I saw bowed horses, bloody from battle.
And after the shouting, bitter reflection.

Before Geraint, scourge of the enemy,
I saw white horses, bowed and bloody.
And after the shouting, a bitter grave.

Before Geraint, destroyer of the enemy,
I saw white horses, their coats all bloody.
And after the shouting, a bitter shroud.

In Llongborth I saw battle-fury
And biers without number,
And men all bloody from Geraint's onslaught.

In Llongborth I saw conflict:
Warriors in battle, knee deep in blood,
Before the great onslaught of Erbin's son.

In Llongborth I saw slaughter:
Warriors in fear and blood on skulls,
Before great Geraint, his father's son.

Fast ran the horses under Geraint's thighs,
Long-legged, grown sturdy on grain;
Swift as heath fire on mountain wastes.

Fast ran the horses under Geraint's thighs,
Long-legged, nurtured on grain;
Red with blood and swift as bold eagles.

Fast ran the horses under Geraint's thighs,
Long-legged, well fed on grain;
Red with blood and swift as white eagles.

Rac gereint gelyn dihat.
gweleis y veirch krymrud o gat.
a gwedy gawr garw bwyllat.

Rac gereint gelyn kythrud.
gweleis y veirch can crymrud.
a gwedy gawr garw achlud.

Rac gereint gelyn ormes.
gweleis meirch can creu eu cnes.
a gwydi gaur garv achles.

Yn llongborth gweleis i wytheint.
ac elorawr mwy no meint.
a gwyr rud rac ruthur gereint.

Yn llongborth gweleis vrwydrin.
gwyr yg gryt a gwaet hyt deulin.
rac ruthur mawr mab erbin.

En llogborth y gweleis e giminad.
guir igrid a gwaed am iad.
rac gereint vaur mab y tad.

Oed re redeint dan uordwyt gereint.
garhiryon grawn gynnyd
ruthur godeinh ar diffeith vynydd.

Oed re redeint dan uordwyt gereint.
garhiryon grawn odew.
rudyon ruthur cryron glew.

Oed re redeint dan uordwyt gereint.
garhiryon grawn wehin.
rudyon ruthur cryron gwynn.

By the end of the eleventh century the old enemies, the Saxons, had been conquered by the Normans, and the Welsh for another two centuries defended their land against the new aggressors.

Resistance was strongest in the mountainous north, led by the powerful princes of Gwynedd. Its most famous prince, Llywelyn the Great, succeeded, early in the thirteenth century, in uniting most of Wales under his rule. But when his grandson was killed in 1282, the royal line of Gwynedd effectively came to an end, and the implications of his death were recognised well beyond his court at Aberffraw. Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch composed this elegy for his lord, Llywelyn the Last, as he came to be known.

The contrast between the rhetoric, lyricism and emotional intensity of style and the disciplined control of the formal structure is characteristic of early Welsh poetry, but particularly so in this poem. For over a hundred lines, a mood of utter despair and emotional desolation is conveyed within a framework of metrical complexity and rich alliteration. The sustained metaphor of the end of the world is a terrible vision: within a year of Llywelyn's death, Wales had fallen under English rule – planned to be repressive, nakedly colonial, arrogantly alien.

*My heart is cold with fear in my breast. I grieve
For a king, the oak door of Aberffraw.
Bright gold he gave us with his hand;
Worthy was he of a chaplet of gold.
Gold cups of a golden king come not to me, joy
Of Llywelyn; no longer can I bear arms.
Alas for my lord, my faultless hawk,
Alas for the calamity of his fall.
Alas for his loss, alas for his fate,
Alas that I heard how he was hacked down.*

*Mine to curse the English who robbed me,
Mine before death the need to lament,
Mine with good reason to rail against God
Who has left me without him.
Mine to praise him unstinting, unceasing.
Mine to remember him ever more.
Mine to mourn him all my life long.
And as I grieve, so shall I weep.*

*My heart is chill with terror in my breast,
My lust shrivels like a stick gone dry.
Do you not see the rush of the wind and rain?
Do you not see the oak trees clashing?
Do you not see the sea pounding the land?
Do you not see the truth foreshadowed?
Do you not see the sun hurl through the sky?
Do you not see the stars have fallen?
Will you not believe God, you foolish men?
Do you not see the world is ending?
Oh God, that the sea might engulf the land!
What is there left that we should linger?*

*Oer galon dan fron o fraw allwynin
Am frenin dewin dor Aberffraw
Aur dilyfn a delid oi law
Aur dalaeth oedd deilwng iddaw
Eurgyrn aur deyrn ni'm daw llawenydd
Llywelyn nid rhydd i'm rhwydd wisgaw
Gwae fi am Arglwydd gwalch diwradwydd
Gwae fi o'r aflwydd ei dramgwyddaw
Gwae fi or golled gwae fi or dynged
Gwae fi or clyyd fod clwyf arnaw*

*Ys mau bid wrth Sais am fy nhreisiaw
Ys mau rhag angau angen gwynaw
Ys mau gan ddefnydd ymddifanw a Duw
Am edewis hebddaw
Ys mau ei ganmawl deb dawl heb daw
Ys mau fyth bellach ei faith bwyllaw
Ys mau i'm dyn hoedl am danaw afar
Can ys mau alar ys mau wylaw*

*Oerfelawg calon dan fron o fraw
Rewydd fal crinwydd y sy'n crinaw
Pam na welwchwi hynt y gwynt ar glaw
Pam na welchwi'r deri yn ymdaraw
Pam na welwchwi'r mor yn merwinaw'r tir
Pam na welwchwi'r gwi'r yn ymgyweiriaw
Pam na welwchwi'r haul yn hwylaw'r awyr
Pam na welwchwi'r syr wedi syrthiaw
Pam na chredwchwi Dduw dyniadon ynfed
Pam na welwch chwi'r byd wedy bydiaw
Och hyd attad Dduw na ddaw mor dros dir
Pa beth i'n gedir i ohiriaw*



Llym Awel consists of translations by Shirley Jones of selected verses from seventh to thirteenth century Welsh poetry, set & printed by her alongside the early Welsh, in 18pt Perpetua italic, with introductory passages set in roman. The columns of verse printed in two colours, on Barcham Green hand made paper, face her six mezzotints & a relief etching of Welsh landscapes. One double-page mezzotint is overprinted with the poetry. The title page calligraphy is by Angela Swan. This is number 28 of an edition limited to 40.

Shirley Jones

I have studied the work of many Welsh scholars in preparing the text of Llym Awel, & wish to acknowledge in particular my indebtedness to Jenny Rowland & Bobi Jones for their valuable insights. And my thanks to Huw Jones of the National Library of Wales.

